

Life-Saving Mobile Hospital Made Possible by Federal Funding

For Immediate Release: October 10, 2007

Contact: Kimberly Allen, (202) 226-8364, (202) 420-1524 [cell]

HUMC Unveils Life-Saving Mobile Hospital Made Possible by Federal Funding Secured by Rothman and New Jersey Senators

Pictured (L-R): Sen. Menendez, Sen. Lautenberg, Rep. Rothman, Dr. Joseph Feldman, and HUMC Vice President Bob Torre cut the ribbon on the prototype of HUMC's Mobile Emergency Trauma Unit on Tuesday, October 9.

(Hackensack, NJ)— Congressman Steve Rothman (D-Fair Lawn), along with Senators Frank Lautenberg (D-NJ) and Robert Menendez (D-NJ), this week joined Hackensack University Medical Center (HUMC) leaders to unveil the first Emergency Mobile Trauma Unit (ETU) and several support vehicles developed by the hospital. The ETU prototype -- the first hospital on wheels built with its compact design -- is ready for deployment in the event of a terrorist attack or other mass casualty incident in the area. It was made possible by \$3.2 million in federal funding secured by Rothman and his Senate colleagues in the 2006 and 2007 defense spending bills.

"It is a privilege to bring federal funding to our region, especially for life-saving equipment. This mobile trauma unit will enable emergency responders to provide advanced, on-the-scene medical care in the event of a terrorist attack or large-scale disaster in an urban area. When it comes to defending American lives, we must prepare for all situations and strive to improve our response in every way possible," said Rothman, a member of the House Appropriations Committee's Subcommittee on Defense, which makes decisions about U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) spending.

DOD's Defense Threat Reduction Agency, which worked closely with HUMC to develop the prototype, is looking to replicate the HUMC model in urban and suburban areas all across the country. This trauma unit is the first of its kind built to mobilize immediately and maneuver in urban and suburban areas where streets are narrower and more densely populated than they are elsewhere. Current technology primarily supports mobile medical responses in wide open areas, which are not likely terrorist targets, and the vehicles can take days to prepare to respond.

At the unveiling ceremony on Tuesday, October 9, 2007, Joseph Feldman, M.D., chair of the Department of Emergency Medicine at HUMC, explained that delivery of the mobile ETU marks the conclusion of the first phase of a three part program. The second phase, which is underway using \$2 million of the \$3.2 million in federal funds Rothman and the Senators secured, involves the development and construction of a mobile operating room that can connect to the mobile trauma unit. This will allow life saving surgical procedures to be performed while the victim is still at the scene.

The third phase focuses on developing a decontamination unit and pharmacy and creating a regional training center known as a Disaster Institute. In addition to hospital staff, training would be provided for civilian police, fire, and rescue services. Rothman, Menendez, and Lautenberg are working to secure millions more in federal funding for this phase in the 2008 Defense Appropriations Bill.

"We have Congressman Rothman, Senators Lautenberg and Menendez, and the U.S. Department of Defense to thank for helping Hackensack University Medical Center bring the 'next generation in medical preparedness' to northern New Jersey and the entire tri-state area," said Robert L. Torre of Hackensack, Executive Vice President of the HUMC Foundation.

"These units provide our communities with the best on-site trauma care possible. Instead of bringing disaster victims to the hospital, these mobile units bring the hospital to them," said Senator Lautenberg. "With these vehicles, New Jersey will be better prepared to handle emergencies and disaster response."

"Every day, in our fight to protect our nation, we strive to be as prepared as we possibly can, and to respond with every tool that we have. I am proud to have worked to obtain federal funding for this vehicle, which will undoubtedly change the nature of emergency medical response; it will change the response our emergency personnel are able to provide in the moments after an event; and it will change the lives of those in need of immediate and comprehensive medical attention," said Senator Menendez.

###